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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 PC-01 /058 W

----- 123567

P R 301155Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9543

USIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

CALCUTTA 5031

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PINT, IN

SUBJ: EMERGENCY SITUATION -- INDIAN MEDIA, JUNE 28 AND 29

1. ZVSUNDAY'S NEWSPAPERS, WHICH AGAIN ALL APPEARED EXCEPT FOR MOTHERLAND, RETURNED TO MORE NORMAL SIZE AND APPEARANCE. EDITORIALS, USUALLY SCANT ON SUNDAY,S WERE JUST THAT EXCEPT FOR THE FEW EXCEPTIONS CITED BELOW. BYLINE COLUMNS, THE TRADITIONAL SUNDAY FARE, AVOIDED THE SUBJECT OF CENSORSHIP OR THE EMERGENCY.

2. A NUMBER OF BRIEF NEWS ITEMS DEALT WITH THE STATE-BY-STATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRESIDENTIALLY-DECLARED EMERGENCY INCLUDING LOCAL DESIGNATION OF PRESS CENSORS, BANS ON ASSEMBLY AND PUBLIC
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USE OF LOUDSPEAKERS. OTHER STORIES WERE OBVIOUSLY MOTIVATED BY

THE NEED TO KNOCK DOWN RUMORS, E.G. "RUMOR DENIED--CALCUTTA" (SETTING STRAIGHT A FALSE REPORT ON ARREST OF CERTAIN LOCAL LEADERS); OR TO PROVE THAT OPPOSITION CALLS FOR DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE FLOPPED: "RAMPUR BANDH (SHUTDOWN) FLOPS;" "BIHAR BANDH FLOPS;" -- ALL FROM JUNE 29 TIMES OF INDIA.

3. SIMILARLY, ALL INDIA RADIO WAS USED SATURDAY TO KNOCK DOWN THE WIDESPREAD RUMOR THAT FORMIN CHAVAN AND AGMIN RAM WERE UNDER HOUSE ARREST. BOTH MINISTERS APPEARED ON AIR IN PRESENTATIONS OF LITTLE SUBSTANCE. (CHAVAN NOTED THAT THE EMERGENCY WOULD NOT AFFECT FOREIGN POLICY AND RAM SAW THE EMERGENCY AS PERMITTING BETTER FOOD PROCUREMENT.)

4. A NUMBER OF UNSOURCED STORIES IN VARIOUS PAPERS ON JUNE 29 DEALT WITH A REPORTED DROP IN PRICES OF SUGAR, SHORTENING, PULSES, WHEAT AND CLOTH DURING THE LAST DAY OR SO, ASCRIBING THESE TO THE SALUTORY IMPACT OF THE EMERGENCY. AIR'S NEWSCASTS SATURDAY AND SUNDAY ALL EMPHASIZED GOI PLANS FOR BETTER FOOD PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION TO HELP FARMERS AND CONSUMERS.

5. THERE WAS NO ATTEMPT IN SUNDAY'S PAPERS TO LEAVE EMPTY BOXES REPRESENTING CENSORED MATERIAL AND LITTLE USE OF IRONY, EXCEPT FOR AN INDIAN EXPRESS CARTOON. CARTOONIST ABU ABRAHAM'S TRADITIONAL MUTT AND JEFF MPS WERE SHOWN WITH THEIR HANDS CLAPPED OVER THEIR MOUTHS, THEIR USUAL TRENCHANT SPOKEN COMMENT ABSENT.

6. ALL THE PAPERS FRONT-PAGED THE STORY OF THE FIRE AT DELHI'S AIR STUDIO ON SATURDAY EVENING WHICH TOOK FOUR HOURS TO BRING UNDER CONTROL, REPORTING THAT POLICE SUSPECT SABOTAGE, AND INSERTION MADE AT THE INSISTANCE OF THE CENSOR.

7. ONLY THREE OF NEWSPAPERS SEEN IN DELHI DELT EDITORIALY WITH THE EMERGENCY. THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS, NOTING THAT PRESIDENT AHMED HAD CALLED FOR "RESTRAINT ON BOTH SIDES" (ACTUALLY WE UNDERSTAND THIS WAS WHAT THE "OPPOSITION" MPS ASKED FOR, NOT AHMED) AND THAT MRS. GANDHI HAD REPEATEDLY DECLARED IN THE PAST THREE DAYS THAT SHE BELIEVES IN THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, EDITORIALY QUESTIONED WHETHER GENUINE COOPERATION OF THE PRESS CAN BE SECURED IF "THE PRESS IS NOT ALLOWED REASONABLE FREEDOM TO COLLECT THE FACTS AND PUBLISH THEM WITH DUE REGARD TO THE SITUATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CREATED BY THE EMERGENCY? SHOULD THE AUTHORITIES GET UNDULY WORKED UP OR DISPLAY EXCESSIVE SENSITIVENESS BECAUSE SOME NEWSPAPERS EXPRESS THEIR DISAPPEALMENT WITH CENSORSHIP BY LEAVING SOME COLUMNS BLANK? SURELY THE EDIFICE OF THE INDIAN STATE IS NOT SO FRAGILE THAT EVEN SUCH INNOCUOUS FORMS OF DISSENT CANNOT BE TOLERATED." THE NATIONAL HERALD EDITORIALIZED ON PRESIDENT TITO'S WARNING THAT "IMPERIALIST, REACTIONARY AND AGGRESSIVE FORCES" ARE EXPLOITING AND PROVOKING CONFUSION IN THEIR ATTEMPTS

TO DISCOURAGE THE NEW EMERGING NATIONS. PATRIOT ATTACKED "THE
PAKISTANI RADIO, THE CONGENITALLY ANTI-INDIAN AMERICAN PRESS AND
THE BBC" FOR "CARRYING ON WILD CAMPAIGNS OF CALUMNY AND SPREAD-
ING THE MOST UNFOUNDED RUMOURS ABOUT WHAT HAS HAPPENED AND IS
HAPPENING IN THIS COUNTRY."

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL REPRESSION, CENSORSHIP, THE PRESS, NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 JUN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975NEWDE08609
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750225-0867
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975063/aaaaacri.tel
Line Count: 121
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <21 NOV 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EMERGENCY SITUATION -- INDIAN MEDIA, JUNE 28 AND 29
TAGS: PINS, PINT, IN
To: STATE USIA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006